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Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
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Canada

of would-be members were received. But everywhere there was thoroughly appreciative interest, and the promise of good work.

The Edinburgh Branch, formed at the desire of Mrs. Whyte, is intended more especially for parents belonging to Dr. Whyte's very large and influential congregation. There is a desire for one or two other (open) Branches in Edinburgh, and Miss Mason has promised a second visit there in January next.

The committee have to thank Mrs. Gordon (a member of the Council) and Mrs. Hugh Barbour for their kind exertions in arranging for these meetings.

The following letter is another gratifying proof of the interest felt in the P.N.E.U. Such recognition by a great continental University is not without its value:—

PARIS.

MADEMOISELLE,—Soyez assez bonne pour m'excuser de m'adresser à vous directement, quand je n'ai pas l'honneur d'être connu de vous.

Au cours d'un voyage que j'ai fait cet été en Angleterre, comme je m'enquérais de l'education familiale en ce pays, plusieurs personnes m'ont signalé l'existence d'une association très digne d'attention, "The Parents' National Educational Union," en ajoutant que vous étiez tout particulièrement à même de donner toutes les informations désirables à ce sujet. Aujourd'hui encore, je reçois une lettre d'un professeur anglais qui insiste sur l'importance de ce mouvement et ajoute que vous êtes la personne la plus capable de me communiquer les documents propres à me le faire connaître. Comme je prépare en ce moment le cours public que je dois faire cet hiver à la Sorbonne sur l'éducation en Angleterre, je me reprocherais d'aborder ce grand sujet sans être en possession de toutes les données essentielles. C'est pourquoi, mademoiselle, j'ose vous prier de vouloir bien me renseigner sur le point en question (et même subsidiairement, sur tout autre que vous paraîtrait particulièrement digne d'être mis en lumière), si vous le pouvez du moins sans trop de peine et sans consacrer à un étranger inconnu un temps precieux qui vous ne lui devez pas.

Il s'agit au moins, je peux vous l'assurer, d'une sincère admirateur de votre beau pays.

Veuillez agréer, mademoiselle, l'hommage de mon profond respect.

HENRI MARION,
Professeur à la Sorbonne.

22, Rue de Grenelle, Paris.

THE

PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

OUR CHILDREN AS OBSERVERS OF NATURE.

BY G. R. WYNNE, D.D.

A METHOD of training children, both in observing and recording natural phenomena, suggested itself to me a good many years ago.

The Royal Meteorological Society has organized, as one branch of its work, a system of observation of the dates of first flowering and leafing of certain plants, and of the arrival and departure of Summer migrants; of the beginning of the song of a number of birds, and of the first appearance of certain insects.

These are reported on and classified by an officer of the society, and important conclusions as to the relative climates of different places, years and decades will be deduced therefrom.

A good many years since such observations were begun at the Meteorological Station near which I live, and I engaged my children as assistant observers, not only of the above, but of the direction of the wind, the form and amount of cloud, the amount of rain, etc. The result has been to train a little band of accurate observers, habituated to record their observations in a concise form. The original impetus was given to the plan by the offer of a trifling gift to the child who first brought me, in any year, a specimen of any flower or insect required. But it was not long before the interest grew and deepened, and the observations were pursued for their own sake.

A little reflection will show how much may be gained by training children in this branch of Nature-lore.

They learn that to every season and month of the year special flowers, etc., are allotted, and long before their appearance they are searching roads, and fields, and woods, each child resolved to be the first to detect the expected object. Instead of just taking the flower, or bee, or bird for granted when it appears, they carefully watch for them beforehand, and come to associate the seasons closely with their botanical and ornithological facts.

They learn about the habits and the habitats of birds, insects, and flowers, and each child becomes very knowing in learning just where to go. Early in the morning, perhaps on some May day, one will run out before breakfast, to capture the Dutch clover which was just ready to break out yesterday. They anxiously watch for the first swallow: they are eager to scan the wall top for the mouse-ear hawkweed, or to take a walk to the rocky brake in pursuit of the first hare-bell or wild thyme.

They learn the names of many flowers; and (if this be an advantage) the Latin as well as the English name. They feel a deepened interest in their walks, and talk with their companions of what they see, instead of the discussions on dress or personal peculiarities which sometimes form the staple of girls' talk.

They learn to compare season with season, and to ask the reason *why* the Celandine bloomed on the 21st of January one year, and not until the end of February the next. Thus they come to connect phenomena together, and to learn the influence of warmth and light on the date of arrival of the various objects.

As the season passes on the interdependence of insects and plants will, (if a little judicious guidance be given) be studied with intense interest. The fertilization of a Salvia or an orchis, the reason for the shape of the bell of a foxglove; the marvellous adaptations of wild *arum* will awaken wonder and reverence for Nature and its Author.

They will trace the reason for the colours of flowers, and for the innumerable contrivances for the diffusion first of pollen and then of seed.

Perhaps they will find in the study of the latest of the Phenological plants, the Ivy, a reason to admire the provision reserved to the very last for the insect tribes before hybernating, and for the birds, in the very late maturing in the winter of the ivy-berries, after hips, and haws, and holly-berries have been swept clean from the trees.

In recording all these phenomena, and others which are incidentally observed while pursuing the prime object of the young "Phenologist," the habit of scientific accuracy will be developed; especially when the rules of the Meteorological Society are strictly insisted upon, viz., that the same tree or a plant growing in the same place must every year be observed: and that the exact date of flowering, *i.e.*, the appearance of the stamens, must be recorded, for an observation two or three days old, becomes nearly worthless.

Finally, if the more intelligent observers are introduced by letter to the organizer of this branch (Edward Mawley, Esq., Berkhampstead, Herts), he may be very pleased to enrol among his staff of observers some promising young phenologist, whom the teacher has certified to be reliable and accurate.

It may be proper here, for the sake of teachers or parents who would like to interest the young, in the opening of the season of 1895, with the appearance of Hazel and Celandine, to append a list of the plants which are *now* required by the Society, to which an extended list is added for those who wish to go more fully into the work of observation. In the hall of the house, a ruled form may be hung up, on which year after year the phenological facts may be entered. The comparison of year with year becomes very interesting.

PLANTS.

1. Hazel* (*Corylus Avellana*).
2. Coltsfoot (*Tussilago Farfara*).
3. Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*).
4. Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).
5. Garlic Hedge Mustard (*Sisymbrium Alliaria*).

6. Horse Chestnut (*Æsculus Hippocastanum*).
7. Hawthorn (*Cratægus Oxyacantha*).
8. White Ox Eye (*Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum*).
9. Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*).
10. Black Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).
11. Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*).
12. Greater Bindweed (*Convolvulus Sepium*).
13. Ivy (*Hedera Helix*).

INSTRUCTIONS TO OBSERVERS.

1. *Observe the same individual trees and shrubs each year, and as regards plants, those growing in precisely the same spots.*—This is of the greatest importance. In the case of trees and shrubs they must be of mature growth. The particular plants, &c., selected for observation should be situated neither in very sheltered, nor, on the other hand, in very exposed positions, and should neither be abnormally early or late in their flowering for the district. When from any cause any of the selected plants, trees, or shrubs cease to be available, other specimens of the same variety similarly situated should be observed instead of them.

2. *Watch carefully for the appearance of the first flowers.*—A plant, &c., is to be considered "in flower" when the stamens of the first blossom on it *first* become visible. As soon as the date of one plant has been secured, watch for the appearance of the next on the list. If, unfortunately, the first flowering be missed by a day or two, the observer is requested to give the estimated date of first flowering, and to place an asterisk against the entry. Should the plant be estimated to have been in flower more than four days, no entry at all should be made, *as the observation would be of no value whatever for the purpose of this investigation.*

*3. In the case of the Hazel the *fertile* flowers are to be observed. They are little bright red flowers, which, as a rule, open directly after the barren flowers or catkins.

EXTENDED LIST, EXCLUDING THOSE ABOVE.

Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*).
Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*).
Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*)
Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*).
Great Willow (*Salix capræa*).
Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudo-narcissus*).
Elm (*Ulmus montana*).
Whitlow Grass (*Draba verna*).
Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*).
Ground Ivy (*Nepeta glechonea*).

Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratensis*).
Starwort (*Stellaria Holostea*).
Bluebell (*Scilla nutans*).
Blue Speedwell (*Veronica Chamaedris*).
Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*).
Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*).
Laburnum (*Cytisus laburnum*).
Beech (*Fagus Sylvaticus*)
Silverweed (*Potentilla Anserina*).
Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*).
Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Hieracium Pilosella*).
Watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*).
Poppy (*Papaver Rhœas*).
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*).
Yellow Iris (*Iris Pseudo-acorus*)
Wild Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*).
Mallow (*Malvus sylvestris*).
Meadow Sweet (*Spiræa Utmaria*).
Hedge Vetch (*Vicia cracca*).
Thistle, (field) (*Carduus arvensis*).
St. John's Wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*).
(Devils' Bit) Scabious (*Scabiosa succisa*).
Mugwort (*Artemesia vulgaris*).
Mint (*Mentha aquatica*).

BIRDS.

1. Song Thrush (*Turdus musicus*), first heard.
2. Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). first seen.
3. Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), first heard.
4. Nightingale (*Daulias luscinia*), first heard.
5. Flycatcher (*Musicapa grisola*), first seen.
6. Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), last seen.

INSECTS.

1. Honey Bee (*Apis mellifica*), first seen.
2. Wasp (*Vespa vulgaris*), first seen.
3. Small white Butterfly (*Pieris rapæ*), first seen.
4. Orange-tip Butterfly (*Anthocharis cardamines*), first seen.
5. Meadow-brown Butterfly (*Epinephile Janira*), first seen.

INSTRUCTIONS TO OBSERVERS.

1. The date when the Hive Bee first visits flowers.
3. This must not be mistaken for the large White Butterfly, which generally makes its appearance a little later than the Small White one.

It will probably be a stimulus to more thoughtful young people to know that in various parts of the country there are still wanting accurate observers of the above-named phenomena.

The training in youth in such observation will tell on the happiness as well on the general intelligence and accuracy of the young people in later years.

A well-trained teacher may open up a source of the greatest enjoyment by pointing out the interlacing of the various sciences. The influence of the sun on life immediately connects Astronomy with Biology, Botany, etc. Geology is illustrated by Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, and even by Astronomy. The science of Chemistry, especially in all which is connected with the hydro-carbons, is a help to understanding the physiology of plants. Mechanics reach on the one side to Astronomy, on the other to the muscular system of animals.

The tendency of all physical laws to range themselves under one supreme law, of all forces to exhibit themselves as modifications of one force, cannot but impress the reflecting mind. The Unity of Nature becomes more surprising the more the countless facts of Nature are studied, and in training our children in Nature-lore we are preparing them to be not only scientific, but religious, and religious not in the sense of being instructed in many dogmas, but in the sense of being filled with an ever increasing sense of the manifold wisdom of God.

ATTENTION.

BY MRS. M. WOLRYCHE-WHITMORE.

AMONG the books set for study in the *Mothers' Education Course* is a rather sombre-looking volume called "*Mental Physiology*," by Dr. Carpenter. I have generally found that my friends are repelled by the title and pass it by in favour of some more attractive-sounding work, but those among them who have had the courage to attack it, have been immediately enthralled, and are generally unable to put it down.

The Editor has invited me to bring some of the subjects treated of in this delightful book before the readers of the *Parents' Review* in a series of papers; but I would beg any who feel interested in the working of that most wonderful of physical organs, the human brain, to study Dr. Carpenter's book for themselves.

We are all familiar with the fact that it is not the eye which sees, nor the ear which hears, but the brain. The eye and ear are merely instruments by which impressions are conveyed to the brain. Therefore if the optic or auditory nerves, by means of which impressions pass to the brain, were destroyed, the man would be blind or deaf, although the eye or ear itself might remain perfect. The part of the brain to which impressions made on the different senses are conveyed is called the Sensorium, and here the sense-impressions become sensations. But it is not only the external senses which send their reports to the sensorium. If it were so we should be conscious indeed of sights, sounds, etc., but should have no consciousness of the emotions and ideas passing through our own minds.

Lying above the sensorium is another portion of the brain, called the cerebrum; here sensations give rise to thoughts and the higher mental operations are carried on. A double set of nerves connects the cerebrum with the sensorium. The ascending fibres carry the report of changes in the sensorium